

Scriptures That Support Universal Restoration

Description

This article is the 5th part of a 9 part series on Universal Restoration vs Eternal Torment (hell). I recommend reading [the introduction](#) first if you haven't already. (*link below*)

1. [Universal Restoration vs Eternal Torment \(hell\) introduction](#)
2. [The Biggest Hole in Hell: Aion, Ages and Eternity](#)
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5. Scriptures That Support Universal Restoration (**You are here**)
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This chapter is divided into two parts. The first few passages provide more general arguments while the second covers more specific scriptures, excluding those in Revelation. The ones in Revelation will be covered [in a separate article](#).

General Scriptures

One interesting thing about the Universal Restoration position is that it keeps everything you know about the end times intact. The only difference is they say that unbelievers can repent and be saved after death. (*After being in "hell" long enough to cry out to God.*)

The idea is that sooner or later, everyone will repent and all mankind will be saved.

God's Will can't be thwarted

Both the Eternal Torment and Universalist position agree that God prefers that no one is lost to the lake of fire. He sent His own son to die a horrible death to save us so we know He wants to save us.

The Scriptures are very clear on this point:

Ezekiel 18:32

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord God. “Therefore, repent and live.”

Ezekiel 33:11a

11a Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.

1 Timothy 2:3-4

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

However, this is where Universalism and Eternal Torment part ways.

Eternal Torment says that God wants man to be saved, but unbelievers won't allow themselves to be saved. God gives us a choice, and respects that choice even if we reject His mercy and then spend an eternity in torment. (*Unless you are a Calvinist, in which case they God doesn't want some people to be saved*) There are several analogies that Eternal Torment supporters use for this position.

For example: There is a man drowning and the coast guard throws him a life preserver. The drowning decides he doesn't want to be saved. The coast guard tried, but the man didn't want to be saved and so the man drowns.

The Universalist will respond that any coast guard won't be happy with that but will jump into the water and drag the man to safety. (*watch the movie "The Guardian" starring Kevin Costner if you don't believe me.*)

They say that yes man has free will and some will reject God in this life, but the lake of fire will

eventually change everyone's mind. The Universalist sees God as a parental figure that will use reward and punishment to produce the intended result. Just like an earthly parent can make their children obey without violating their free will, so God can make us obey without violating ours.

They point out all the verses that emphasize just how powerless humans are to resist the will of God, even if we fight Him. They cite verses like the ones below to support that point.

Job 42:1-2

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,

2 "I know that **you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.**

Isaiah 46:9-10

9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, '**My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure** ';

Psalms 135:5-6

5 I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods.

6 **The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth,** in the seas and all their depths.

Daniel 4:35

35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, **But He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand** or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

I personally love Isaiah 40's take on the Almighty God.

Isaiah 40:1319 + 22-28

13 Who can fathom the Spirit of the LORD, or instruct the LORD as his counselor?

14 Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

17 Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

18 With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him?

...

22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

23 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

24 No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

25 "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

27 Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"?

28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

I probably don't need to convince you that God is All-powerful.

- The Universalist says that God is loving enough, powerful enough and wise enough to save all of mankind without violating their free will.
- The Eternal Torment position says that God wants to save all of mankind and has done

everything he can to save us except violate our free will, but we won't allow Him to save us. (*Again, except Calvinists who say God doesn't want to save some/most people*)

I have a slight problem with mankind "allowing" God to do anything. To Calvinists, I have a serious Biblical problem with saying that God doesn't want some/most people to be saved, despite the Scriptures we recently saw to the contrary.

Again the Universalist would say that God is like the parent of a stubborn child. We might kick scream and fight, but at the end of the day we will do what He wants us to do. And just like an earthly parent, He doesn't need to violate our free will to make a rebellious child behave.

To back up their "not violating free will" argument, Universalists looks to:

1 Corinthians 15:25-27

24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN **SUBJECTION** UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

The word used for subjection there is the word "Hupotasso" which is the same word used here:

Ephesians 5:22-24

21 and be **subject** to one another in the fear of Christ.

22 Wives, be **subject** to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

24 But as the church is **subject** to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

The idea in both cases is **not** a greater force making a lesser force submit. It is the idea that the person submitting is doing it willingly and not under compulsion. So the sense here is that everyone will

willingly put themselves in subjection to Christ.

The Universalist will then say “*see, no free will violated because it’s willing.*” That’s the general argument the Universalist makes.

God’s wrath will end

Another more general Scripture is found in Isaiah.

Isaiah 57:15-21

15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

16 “**For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry;** For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath of those whom I have made.

17 “Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him; I hid My face and was angry, And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart.

18 “**I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners,**

19 Creating the praise of the lips. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,” Says the LORD, “and I will heal him.”

20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot * be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud.

21 “**There is no peace,**” says my God, “**for the wicked.**”

The Universalist position on this scripture is that it’s an indication that God’s wrath will not last forever. The lake of fire will be horrible, but the wicked will only be there until they repent turn to God. Then God’s wrath will end, He will “heal him” and they will be free to enter heaven. But as long as you remain wicked and unrepentant, you will have no peace.

Love Your Enemies

The last more General Scripture is found in Matthew

Matthew 5:43-48

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’

44 “But I say to you, **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**

45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46 “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 “If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

48 “**Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

The Universalist argument goes that we are told to “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”. The context tells us that Jesus is talking about loving your enemies.

The general thrust of this argument is that Eternal Torment isn't loving to your enemies, therefore God wouldn't do it because “God is Love”. Whereas limited duration torment to turn the wicked away from their sin and toward God is loving. God uses a punishment to improve our situation, because the lake of fire is not a good place to be.

The Eternal Torment supporter will usually respond that God is love indeed, but He is also perfectly Just. And if we don't accept His mercy, then He must punish us.

Next, we'll look at specific passages.

There are dozens of verses which seem to lean toward Universal Restoration, but aren't clear. I'm going to ignore those here and only focus on the ones that are hardest to see from a traditional “hell” viewpoint

Colossians 1:16-20

Let's talk about Colossians first.

Colossians 1:16-20

16 For by Him **all things** were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – **all things** have been created through Him and for Him.

17 He is before **all things**, and in Him **all things** hold together.

18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in **everything**.

19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for **all** the fullness to dwell in Him,

20 and through Him to reconcile **all things** to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Every word Highlighted in red above is the Greek word "[Pas](#)". It's used 1242 times in the New Testament. 731 of those times it's translated "all", 126 times it's translated "all things", and 128 times it's translated "every". The remaining 257 times it's translate things like "all kinds", "all men", "every kind", "everything", etc.

Pas means "all".

There's no doubt about that.

It's very clear, and verses 16-19 use Pas to clearly indicate this fact. So as you saw in verse 20, things get interesting.

Colossians 1:20

20 and through Him to **reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.**

When God says he will "reconcile all things to Himself", is it possible that He really does mean all?

If you keep reading he talks about how Christians are reconciled to him through the cross. I suppose there might be a way to take this to mean "all" means only "all Christians". But you need to do some serious scriptural twisting to make that fit. I don't like having to say "*I know the Bible says ABC, but what it really means is XYZ.*" I don't like it. In fact I hate it.

I'm against scriptural twisting in all its forms.

Let's look at the next few verses.

Colossians 1:21-23

21 **And** although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,

22 yet **He has now reconciled you** in His fleshly body through death, **in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach**—

23 **if indeed you continue in the faith** firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Notice the linking there. “all things will be reconciled” at the end of verse 20, then verse 21 starts with “and”. That’s starting a slightly new section on a (*slightly*) new topic. Notice in verse 22, the reconciliation is to be presented before God “*holy and blameless and beyond reproach* **if indeed you continue in the faith**.”

The “if” statement isn’t about the “reconcile all things to Himself” phrase from verse 20. It’s about being presented “*holy and blameless and beyond reproach*” from verse 22. They will only be presented “*holy and blameless and beyond reproach*” **IF** they “*continue in the faith*”.

Universalism agrees.

The unrepentant will never be presented “*holy and blameless and beyond reproach*” because they aren’t. They need to repent and believe before they are saved. (*Then they can “wash their robes” and “enter through the gate” like Revelation says, which we’ll get to in the next article.*)

Understanding the whole context, I can’t think of a way to interpret this passage that doesn’t agree with the Universal Reconciliation point of view.

It might exist, but I haven’t found it.

The closest explanation I’ve found involves Philippians 2:10

Philippians 2:10

10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and **under the earth**.

The theory goes that because Colossians doesn’t include “*under the earth*” (*where hell figuratively is*) that this verse does not include those in hell. I can kind of see that. I still think it requires some twisting and I’m not happy about that, but I suppose I could see it.

1 Timothy 4:9-11

Next let's look at Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:9-11

9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on **the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.**

11 Prescribe and teach these things.

This one isn't too hard to wiggle around.

From the eternal torment/hell point of view: Jesus died for the sins of all men. However, not everyone will accept His sacrifice. So His salvation is available to all (*so He is the savior of all men*), but only believers accept His sacrifice which is why He has especially saved Believers.

From the Universal Restoration point of view: Jesus died for all, and all will eventually end up in heaven with Him. Believers will go straight to heaven because they believed. However unbelievers will be in the lake of fire until they repent from their wickedness and turn to Jesus. Afterward, they'll be allowed into heaven. Therefore, Jesus is the savior of all men because all will end up in heaven, but He's especially the savior of believers because they will skip the lake of fire.

I leave it to the reader to decide which makes more sense.

John 12:31-33

And now John gets his turn.

John 12:31-33

31 "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, **will draw all men to Myself.**"

33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

This one is interesting.

The obvious solution from the Eternal Torment supporters is the “*every knee will bow and every tongue confess*” passages. The idea that Jesus will draw everyone to Himself for that proclamation, then He’ll punish them for all eternity.

I’m not sure that makes sense, but it’s one answer.

Slightly supporting this position is the word used for “draw” in verse 32. It’s the word “[Helkuo](#)” which can also mean “drag/dragged”. It’s used this way elsewhere.

Acts 16:19

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** (*Helkuo*) them into the market place before the authorities,

Acts 21:30

30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they **dragged** (*Helkuo*) him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

So maybe the dragging is done even though the person doesn’t want to be there. Maybe they don’t want to bend the knee or confess, but God makes them. However, wouldn’t that mean that God violated their free will? We’ve already seen the subjection here is entirely willing by the people who are confessing. Of course, being in the presence of God tends to make people fall down and worship Him

We’ll come back to the “*Every knee will bow and every tongue confess*” passages in a little bit because there’s more to say. But it fits better with another verse.

Titus 2:11-12

Titus is up next.

Titus 2:11-12

11 For the grace of God has appeared, **bringing salvation to all men**

12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

This is an interesting one because it's not the main point of the chapter. It seems to be more of a rabbit trail that's just dropped in the middle of another passage.

The eternal torment/hell view would say: Salvation has been brought to all men, but it doesn't say they receive it. It's like giving a gift. Just because you give someone a gift doesn't mean they have to take.

The Universal Restoration people would say: salvation to all men means salvation to all men. No exceptions, eventually everyone will be saved. Some will spend some time in the lake of fire first, but eventually they too will be saved after repenting.

Again, I leave it to the reader to decide which makes more sense.

Luke 3:4-5

Now John the Baptist in Luke.

Luke 3:4-6

4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.

5 'EVERY RAVINE WILL BE FILLED, AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL WILL BE BROUGHT LOW; THE CROOKED WILL BECOME * STRAIGHT, AND THE ROUGH ROADS SMOOTH

6 AND ALL FLESH WILL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.' "

This is the first verse that gives the Eternal Torment position a lot of trouble.

The only explanation I've heard that makes even a little sense is that "Salvation of God" is a description/title of Jesus (*like "Prince of Peace" or "Wonderful Councilor"*) and it wasn't referring to salvation at all. The idea is that everyone (*all flesh*) will see Jesus at the judgment. Therefore they will see people being saved or "see the salvation" but they won't have access to it. Afterward they'll be thrown into Eternal Torment.

A more simple understanding – that seems more obvious from the passage – is that "all flesh will see the salvation of God" in the sense of being eventually saved.

I leave it to the reader to decide which is more reasonable.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

Now we'll look at Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

(NOTE: Romans 5:18 has a similar theme, though it's less clear. Also worth noting, just a few verses later has the "put all things in Subjection we've talked about a couple times)

This is one of two places I can't find a good explanation for from the Eternal Torment supporters.

The Bible talks elsewhere about the idea that because of Adam, we've all died a spiritual death by being separated from God because of our sin. (*Notably Romans 5:12-19*) Romans does use the word all there (*Pas*), but it's much clearer here in Corinthians.

On the surface, it seems pretty clear that this verse. No one denies that because of Adam, we have all sinned and thus died spiritually. This is basic Christian doctrine based on many places, but Romans is the clearest.

Romans 5:12

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned –

It's pretty clear there. And the idea of being alive in Christ is likewise clear from other verses.

Ephesians 2:4-5

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive together with Christ** (*by grace you have been saved*)

And in Romans again:

Romans 6:11

11 Even so **consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

So when Corinthians says “*as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive*” the obvious explanation – that requires absolutely no twisting of this passage – is that everyone will be saved.

I have heard only two explanations that even come close to explaining how this verse is compatible with Eternal Torment in hell. However, I don’t like either of them.

Explanation #1 says this verse is badly translated and the order of words is wrong. The idea is that instead of “*in Christ all will be made alive*” it should be “*all in Christ will be made alive*”, with “all in Christ” meaning Christians. However, I that just doesn’t holds up to Scrutiny. I checked nearly two dozen Bible translations and they all say “in Christ all”, not “all in Christ”. No respectable commentary takes that position either.

Explanation #2 is even weaker. I have heard people say this refers to the Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20. Again, like the passage in John the idea is they are made alive again long enough to receive judgment then thrown into the lake of fire. However, I don’t think that works if you look at the passage.

Revelation 20:11-15

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

12 And I saw **the dead**, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and **the dead** were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

13 And the sea gave up **the dead** which were in it, and death and Hades gave up **the dead** which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

It's very clear from the passage that the people being judged are dead. It says "the Dead" four times between verses 12 and 13, and I don't think anyone is being made alive here. "Alive in Christ" has always referred to salvation, so I don't think it makes sense in Revelation 20.

So if Paul didn't mean everyone would be saved when he said "*as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive*", what did he mean?

Isaiah 22:12-14

Now we'll look at Isaiah.

Isaiah 22:12-14

12 Therefore in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called you to weeping, to wailing, To shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth.

13 Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, Eating of meat and drinking of wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die."

14 But the LORD of hosts revealed Himself to me, "**Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven you until you die,**" says the Lord GOD of hosts.

Here is the single most difficult verse to explain away from the Eternal Torment position.

If I say to my child: "*Surely you won't get ice cream until you clean your room*" there is an implied promise. The implied promise is that getting ice cream is possible once they have cleaned their room. It's not guaranteed, but it's now possible. In simple contract terms, it states that once a condition has been met, you can get something.

For the child, the condition is getting their room clean. For the evildoers in Isaiah, the condition is death. It sounds very much like God is saying "I'll forgive you, but not in this life."

(NOTE: I have friend who has spent a LOT of time learning about Jewish culture and their views on various topics. According to her, this is the verse Judaism often points to to prove Torment in the afterlife isn't eternal. We'll cover the historical Jewish outlook on the afterlife in a future chapter.)

Romans 10:9-10

Now for Romans.

Romans 10:9-10

9 that **if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and **with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation**.

I know what you're thinking: "Why is this verse here?"

And you're right; this verse is not like the others. There's no mention of salvation for all or all people being in heaven. That's because this verse requires another verse to make the case.

Philippians 2:9-11

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

10 so that **at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and **under the earth**,

11 and that **every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

The part that says "*those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth*" means everyone is included, unlike the Colossians verse we've already discussed.

Please follow the logic:

- If confessing that Jesus is Lord results in salvation (*According to Romans*)
- And if "*every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*" (*According to Philippians*)

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- Then everyone will be saved. (*assuming you can be saved after death*)

This verse combo – and the argument it’s built upon – requires that you can be saved after death.

We’ve already talked about how Jesus preached the Gospel “*even to those who are dead*” “*who once were disobedient*” long ago “*in the days of Noah*”. Here are the verses again so you can check and double check.

(*Disclaimer, I’m going to repeat some things already covered for clarity’s sake*)

1 Peter 3:18-20

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

19 in which also He went and made **proclamation to the spirits now in prison,**

20 **who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah,** during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

He takes a short rabbit trail and then returns to the topic several verses later:

1 Peter 4:6

6 For **the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit** according to the will of God.

Now, let’s look at God’s opinion of the earth in Noah’s time before the Flood.

Genesis 6:5-8

5 Then the LORD saw that **the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

7 The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from

man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for **I am sorry that I have made them.**"

So "disobedient" is a rather generous description. Yet Jesus went and preached to them anyway. We already know that Jesus has the keys to death and Hades, so the Universal Restoration position makes sense here.

I see one of two possibilities:

1. Jesus preached to the dead to rub it in that they couldn't be saved.
2. Jesus preached to the dead because they still could be saved. (*Isaiah 22:14 looms large here*)

Of those two possibilities, which one sounds more like the Jesus we know? More importantly, which lines up with scripture. In light of another passage, the latter one certainly has merits:

Ephesians 4:8-9

8 Therefore it says, "**WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.**"

9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that **He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?**

It says He led a "Host of captives", but captives from where? Perhaps they were the "the spirits now in prison" mentioned in Peter? They would certainly qualify as captives.

I can't think of anyone else it could be.

And there's more. The BOLD parts in the verse above are a quotation of the Old Testament. Specifically Psalm 68, and here's the rest of that verse:

Psalm 68:18

18 You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives; You have received gifts among men, **Even among the rebellious also**, that the LORD God may dwell there.

Notice the "*Even among the rebellious also*" part? That fits quite well with "*the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient*".

There are a LOT of people who believe in Eternal Torment/hell who trip all over themselves trying to explain this 1 Peter passage. Adding the Ephesians passage makes things even more interesting. However, I still haven't yet heard a good explanation how this fits with the concept of Eternal Torment

in hell.

It might be out there, but I haven't found it. And believe me, I've looked.

So here again are the verses.

Romans 10:9-10

9 that if **you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and **with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation**.

And Also.

Philippians 2:9-11

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of **those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth**,

11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And again here's the logic:

- If confessing that Jesus is Lord results in salvation (*According to Romans*)
- And if "every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (*According to Philippians*)
- Then everyone will be saved. (*assuming you can be saved after death*)

I think the Bible certainly leaves open the possibility of salvation after death. This is especially true because of the last few chapters of Revelation, which we'll look at in the next Article.

Conclusion

Are these scriptures a slam dunk for postmortem salvation? Some show very little support, other seem to show strong support. The trick is to weigh the whole of scripture's testimony and come up with a consistent understanding. One of these ideas seems to, the other does less so.

The next article in this series is: [Scriptures In Revelation That Support Universal Restoration](#)